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ABSTRACT

The first step in the effective reform of urban education is to address the failure of the urban communities of which they are a natural and necessary outgrowth. At the heart of the problem is the inner-city community of adults that has been decimated, leaving few who are capable of responding to the need or bringing meaning and guidance to young people's lives. Because the political will does not exist to eradicate poverty through welfare state strategies, educators must develop schools that can overcome polarization along racial, social, and cultural lines. Inner-city institutions must be rebuilt through schooling in order to sustain democracy and nurture independence and self-reliance. Community schools are the perfect mechanism to prepare workers for the more democratic marketplace needed to enhance national productivity and competitiveness. While schools may be the focus of the revitalization effort, policies that address housing, health, income, child care, and economic development are essential to transforming central cities. The following incentives and opportunities are needed for the development of a new school-community relationship: (1) waive regulations and policies that impede the development of community schools; (2) increase incentive funding; and (3) empower schools to create curricula and environments appropriate to local needs in exchange for the schools' accountability for educational outcomes. A list of programs linking schools and communities and a list of 24 references are appended. (FMW)

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# YOUTH AT RISK

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# RENEWING URBAN SCHOOLS: THE COMMUNITY CONNECTION

by

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July 1988

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

INTRODUCTION . . . . . 1

THE CITIES . . . . . 3
Locating the Crisis in Urban Communities . . . . . 3
Concentration of Poverty and Race in Urban Communities . . . . . 3
The Implications for Schools . . . . . 5

THE SCHOOLS . . . . . 7
Minority Schools: Lower Achievement . . . . . 7

STRUCTURES OF FAILURE . . . . . 11
Schools and the Student's Culture . . . . . 13
The Role of the Dominated-Minority Status in Failure . . . . . 13

PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND THE ECONOMY . . . . . 17
Jobs, Students and the Economic Reality . . . . . 17
Race, Sex and the Urban Economy . . . . . 19
A Proposal for Economic Restructuring . . . . . 19
The New Economic Model: A Futurist's Dream . . . . . 20
Economic Policy and School Reform . . . . . 22

THE CURRENT STATE OF REFORM IN SCHOOLS . . . . . 25
System-based Reform . . . . . 25
Isolated Alternatives . . . . . 26
School-Community Linkages . . . . . 27
The Current State of Reform: Possibilities and Limitations . . . . . 28
Bureaucracy vs. Community . . . . . 28

SCHOOL REFORM AND COMMUNITY RENEWAL . . . . . 31
Schools as Community Institutions . . . . . 32
Renewing the School Community . . . . . 33
Community as the Focus of Study . . . . . 34

CONCLUSION . . . . . 35

FOOTNOTES . . . . . 37

APPENDIX A

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## FOREWORD

This paper is the seventh of an Education Commission of the States (ECS) series focusing on the problems of youth at risk of not successfully making the transition to adulthood -- the dropout, the underachiever and far too many others of our young people who end up disconnected from school and society. The increased isolation of the poor and minorities in certain urban neighborhoods is a trend in every urban center of this country. Across urban centers, substantial variation occurs in the degree to which this isolation is a problem. Further, in certain neighborhoods, independent of what city they are in, the isolation of the urban poor has also reached dangerous proportions. Many schools in these areas have large populations of students who, on any given day, will be truant, on drugs, or armed and simply not engaged in learning activity.

Many policy makers believe that urban education is not worth the effort. Either they believe that urban schools, with their attendant problems, are incapable of providing a quality education or that the associated political problems are too formidable to overcome. This approach is no longer a viable response. In the poorest urban neighborhoods the problems are so severe that drastic measures are being taken. For example, six states currently have an academic bankruptcy statue, and the state legislature in Illinois recently passed a bill restructuring the Chicago school system and giving much more power to parents. Against this political backdrop, Rona Wilensky and D.M. Kline III call for a general re-engagement of state policy makers in the issue of urban education and, in particular, for policy makers to formally involve communities and neighborhoods in the renewal of urban schools. Such a task has never been more important.

Rona Wilensky is an economist by training and has worked as a policy analyst on a wide range of issues, including education, health, civil rights, poverty and day care. D.M. Kline III is an appellate attorney and former journalist. They are partners in the policy consulting firm, Bolder Ideas Group.

Finally, this paper is the first step in an important new direction for the At-Risk Project on the Commission, that of re-engaging state leaders in a productive discussion of urban education. We would like to thank the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for supporting this paper and this series.

Frank Newman
ECS President

Bob Palaich
Project Director

## INTRODUCTION

While it is commonplace for politicians and educators to declare that across the board American public education is in a state of crisis, one sector of the public schools has reached a stage of deterioration and failure beyond comparison with the rest. In the decimated neighborhoods of many urban centers every student is a youth at risk of failure. The grossest statistical measures, those of dropout rates, show that a high school education is either unwanted or unattainable for 50% to 80% of those entering 9th grade in many urban districts.[1] Even the most talented and dedicated students face formidable obstacles in their quest for an education. Overworked teachers labor under immense bureaucracies that thwart even simple objectives. Teachers and students alike suffer the ignominy of working in dilapidated, dangerous and overcrowded buildings. And no matter how imaginative and dedicated the effort, schooling is overwhelmed by the appalling social and economic conditions of the urban neighborhood.

Far too few students graduate and of the ones who do only a small percentage are actually prepared for the entry-level jobs that await them.[2] The others are passed through the system, although they benefit little, and are then shunted off to face a bleak and unrewarding job market.[3] Indeed, there is evidence that suggests that among these students the most ambitious and energetic drop out and the others gain little for their persistence.[4]

Since World War II an unprecedented shift in the distribution and structure of urban populations has radically altered the character of urban life. After decades of social change, the migration of whites and middle-class blacks from the cities, and the commercial decline and revival of major cities, the urban landscape is new and fragmented. Indeed, the experience of urban life and urban schooling is widely varied. For some, cities and their schools have worked well and continue to do so; for others, they are an inescapable nightmare. To begin with, American cities vary radically in their racial, ethnic and economic make-up. Communities and schools in cities like Minneapolis, Seattle and Denver have very little in common with New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Houston. More importantly, within each city the population is racially, ethnically and economically concentrated and isolated. This concentration and isolation is the essential context for the worst problems in urban public schools.

Concentration and isolation of racial and ethnic groups are not new in the American political landscape, but they have taken on a character different from traditional racial and ethnic segregation. Where segregation traditionally resulted in an isolated but viable community that was racially or ethnically distinct, the new urban ghetto is uniformly poor and fails as a functioning community.[5] The long-sought-after goal of integration, once believed to be a key to improvement of schooling for minority students, has been defeated by systems that are made up almost exclusively of minority students and by tracking programs that segregate students within schools.

These problems are compounded by the very methodology with which school reformers approach the issues of education. Schools must grow out of and live within communities. Yet, the integral relationship between schools and community life has been largely ignored in the recent national debate over public schooling. Indeed, except in the politically explosive battles over school busing, the complex role that the community-school link plays in successful education has been passed over for technical and ideological debate on school excellence. While it may be relevant for educators working with the relatively healthy urban and suburban schools to treat reform as a technical problem centered on curriculum,

pedagogy, the mechanics of learning, and the business of managing schools and school systems, the desperate situation of inner-city schools demands a new focus for debate and change. The view of education as an independent arena of public policy is itself a barrier to finding an effective solution to the current crisis. The first step in effective reform can only be taken when public schools are treated as the natural and necessary outgrowth of viable communities.

The crisis in these urban schools is immense and tragic. For schools in these most afflicted communities, there must be a new approach to school reform that begins by addressing the essential problem facing the students and schools: the failure of urban communities to provide the essential foundation for effective schooling. The first section of this paper provide a portrait of the cities, the schools, schooling practices and the economy that are the background for the urban school crisis. The second section treats the response of public schools to the public calls for reform. Finally, the third section sets out an alternative program of reform which directly addresses the crisis of urban public schools as a crisis of community. Appendix A describes selected programs that link schools and communities in urban settings.

## THE CITIES

The city and its communities are the world in which and out of which students grow and live. The potential of schooling, the viability of insightful educational theories and the success of dedicated service are linked to and limited by the foundation provided by the urban community. The largely statistical portrait that follows gives only an outline of the state of urban communities, but it sets out the case well enough. In many urban communities, the economic and cultural base is exhausted. Over the long run no amount of theoretic insight or dedicated service can overcome this fundamental condition without directly attacking the problem of nourishing and rebuilding these communities.

### Locating the Crisis in Urban Communities

There is no single image of American cities that captures their racial, ethnic and economic diversity. The makeup of the population varies, both among the cities and within their boundaries. Neither is the crisis uniformly felt within or among the cities. The failure and collapse of thousands of urban neighborhoods and communities that make up the cities is a process governed by complex historical, regional and economic factors.

But regardless of where or why it occurs, the process of community collapse is characterized by an extreme concentration and isolation of racial minorities and of the poor. This concentration is both a result of economic and social change and a primary cause of further deterioration and the ultimate collapse of the functioning community.

### Concentration of Poverty and Race in Urban Communities

In 1980, 74 million people, representing approximately one third of the U.S. population, lived in cities of at least 50,000. Forty million people, representing almost one fifth of the U.S. population, lived in cities with at least 250,000 residents.[6] Contrary to the popular image, on average, central cities are predominantly white. In 1980, 64% of all central city residents were white, 22% were black, 11% were hispanic and 3% fell into other racial or ethnic categories. Still, this represents a significant concentration of racial minorities in cities. While only 24% of whites live in central cities, 58% of blacks make their home there, as do 50% of Hispanics.[7]

Looking at individual cities, one finds enormous variations in their racial and ethnic composition. Some, such as Atlanta, Baltimore, Detroit, New Orleans, Oakland and Washington D.C., have a majority of minority residents. Others, like Seattle, St. Paul, Portland and Minneapolis, are overwhelmingly white. Few conform to the national average.[8]

Because there is a direct connection between race and ethnicity and poverty, cities with large minority group populations face radically different problems when compared with their predominately white counterparts. According to the 1980 Census, only 8% of white central city residents had family incomes below the poverty level, while the figures for blacks and hispanics were 27% and 25% respectively. The racial and ethnic imbalance is more pronounced if one considers both poor and near-poor families. In 1980, 11% of central city whites had a family income 125% of poverty level or less, while 34% of black families and 32% of hispanic families in the central city lived at this income level.[9]

Central cities are not only home to the majority of minority group citizens, who experience poverty disproportionately, but they are also home to a disproportionate number of families headed by the female, single parents with children under the age of 18, who bear the brunt of contemporary poverty. In 1980, 32% of all such white families, 66% of all such black families and 65% of all such Hispanic families lived in central cities.[10]

The concentration of the poor into isolated communities has been most clearly shown in William Julius Wilson's studies of the nation's five largest cities -- New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia and Detroit -- which by themselves accounted for half of the total poor population of the 50 largest cities in 1980. In these five metropolises, the number of poor grew by 22% between 1970 and 1980, while the number of people (poor and not poor) living in poor neighborhoods (census tracts with at least 20% poverty) grew by 40%. In the neighborhoods with at least 30% of their residents in poverty, total population grew by 69%, while in neighborhoods with poverty rates of at least 40% the total population grew by 161%.[11]

These concentrations of the poor are also concentrations of racial or ethnic minorities. For example, the extremely poor neighborhoods of these five cities were overwhelmingly black or Hispanic. Overall, only 2% of these cities' non-Hispanic whites lived in extremely poor neighborhoods.[12]

Across the board, the minority poor live in communities that are characterized by the extraordinary number of other poor people.[13] In Wilson's words:

> *It is the growth of the high and extreme poverty areas that epitomizes the social transformation of the inner city, a transformation that represents a change in the class structure in many inner-city neighborhoods as the non-poor black middle and working classes tend to no longer reside in these neighborhoods, thereby increasing the proportion of truly disadvantaged individuals and families.*[14]

This concentration of poverty into isolated communities is fundamental to the evolving concept of an underclass which is permanently mired in poverty. The Urban Institute has defined an underclass neighborhood as a census tract with extremely high concentrations of people in each of four categories: female-headed families, high school dropouts, families on welfare and working-age men who do not regularly work. In 1980, there were 880 underclass tracts, with a total population of 2.5 million and a poverty population of 1.1 million. The number of children under age 19 in these areas was 844,000. The racial composition of these tracts was 28% white, 59% black and 10% Hispanic.[15] Moreover, government policies intended to relieve the worst effects of poverty have intensified the patterns of concentration. Public housing projects within these poor neighborhoods have further isolated minorities and concentrated poverty.

The Implications for Schools

Educators and policy planners tend to view poverty as a handicap for the individual student, but the extraordinary concentration of poverty and the resulting deterioration of communities present a different problem. Past some imprecise threshold, the synergistic effect of concentrations of very large numbers of poor people in limited areas of the large cities creates conditions unlike those found in isolated pockets of poverty in relatively affluent cities. Once again, Wilson provides an interesting insight to what this means for students and schools.

> *[A] perceptive ghetto youngster in a neighborhood that includes a good number of working and professional families may observe increasing joblessness and idleness, but he will also witness many individuals regularly going to and from work; he may sense an increase in school dropouts, but he can also see a connection between education and meaningful employment; he may detect a growth in single-parent families, but he will also be aware of the presence of many married-couple families; he may notice an increase in welfare dependency, but he can also see a significant number of families that are not on welfare; and he may be cognizant of an increase in crime, but he can recognize that many residents in his neighborhood are not involved in criminal activity.*
>
> *However, in ghetto neighborhoods that have experienced a steady out-migration of middle- and working-class families -- communities, in other words, that lack a social buffer -- a sudden and/or prolonged increase in joblessness, as existed in the 1970s and first half of the 1980s, creates a ripple effect resulting in an exponential increase in related forms of social dislocation. . . . And as the prospects for employment diminish, other alternatives such as welfare and the underground economy are not only increasingly relied on, they come to be seen as a way of life.*
>
> *Thus, in such neighborhoods the chances are overwhelming that children will seldom interact on a sustained basis with people who are employed or with families that have a steady breadwinner. The net effect is that joblessness, as a way of life, takes on a different social meaning; the relationship between schooling and post-school employment takes on a different meaning. The development of cognitive, linguistic and other educational and job-related skills necessary for the world of work in the mainstream economy is thereby adversely affected. In such neighborhoods, therefore, teachers become frustrated and do not teach and children do not learn. A vicious cycle is perpetuated through the family, through the community and through the schools.*[16]

The problems of poor and minority students in Minneapolis and those in the Cabrini-Green neighborhood of Chicago cannot be treated similarly. Both cases deal with poverty, racism, underachievement, drugs, teenage parenting, violence and underemployment. But the scale of the problem and the enormous differences in the communities' own internal resources for coping will require policies that directly address the extraordinary problems of the communities with the most extreme concentrations of poverty and racial or ethnic minorities. The policy challenge is to reforge the relationships that sustain community life when they are no longer natural to the inner-city neighborhood.

## THE SCHOOLS

The process of concentration of racial and ethnic minorities and the poor is accelerated and magnified in the urban public schools. This happens in part because of white flight from the public school systems and in part because of the internal policies of the schools and school systems themselves.

In 1980, the public school systems of the central cities of the United States served 19% of all the white public school students, 56% of all the black public school students and 48% of all the Hispanic public school students in America.[17] Most of the school systems serving minority students in America are large. In 1984 58% of the black students and 49% of the Hispanic students were served by districts with more than 19,000 students, while 44% of the black students and 37% of the hispanic students were served by districts with more than 40,000 students.[18]

And many of these large urban districts serving minority students are incapable of meaningful integration. Recent projections indicate that within the next few years just seven of the nation's 25 largest city school systems will have white enrollments greater than 30%.[19] In short, urban minority students, like urban minority residents, are concentrated and isolated within urban school systems.

The extent of racial or ethnic concentration within schools can be shown dramatically by comparing the demographic makeup of cities with that of their schools. The following chart illustrates the disparity between cities and schools in the nation's six largest school systems -- New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Miami, Philadelphia and Detroit.

| City | Total Enrollment | Percent Black Enrollment | Percent Black Population | Percent Hispanic Enrollment | Percent Hispanic Population |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| New York | 925,000 | 38 | 25 | 34 | 20 |
| Los Angeles | 560,000 | 19 | 17 | 55 | 28 |
| Chicago | 431,000 | 60 | 40 | 22 | 14 |
| Miami | 222,000 | 35 | 25 | 41 | 56 |
| Philadelphia | 193,000 | 64 | 24 | 9 | 1 |
| Detroit | 184,000 | 91 | 63 | 3 | 2 |

Source: Council of the Great City Schools

Even in cities where the general population remains predominately non-minority, the school systems usually are overwhelmingly black and/or Hispanic.

Indeed, after more than a decade-and-a-half of busing and other court-ordered remedies, there has been little overall change in the segregation or isolation of black students. Since 1972, the major change has been a dramatic increase in the isolation of Hispanics. The following summary of the research by the University of Chicago's Metropolitan Opportunity Center demonstrates the national extent of segregation.[20]

In 1984, only 18.3% of New York State's black students attended predominantly white schools. In Michigan, the figure was 16.2% and in Illinois, 16%. These are the three most segregated states in the country.

In 1984, 85% of the Hispanic students in New York State attended predominantly minority schools. Some 59% were in intensely segregated schools that were 90-100% minority. This level of segregation was higher than that experienced by black students in all but one of the states, Illinois.

The Hispanic population of Illinois is overwhelmingly concentrated in the Chicago public schools. Four-fifths of the state's Hispanic students attend predominantly minority schools and two in five are in intensely segregated schools.

In Texas, with a student population that is 28% Hispanic, 78% of the Hispanic students attend majority nonwhite schools and 40% attend intensely segregated schools.

Three-fourths of California's Hispanic students and 68% of those in Florida attend schools where less than half the students are white. These levels represent significant increases in the degree of Hispanic segregation.

Minority Schools: Lower Achievement

The levels of achievement in predominantly minority schools are significantly lower than those in predominantly white schools, and the likelihood of high dropout rates much greater. A study of 5,000 California schools shows that more than two-thirds of black and Hispanic 3rd graders were in schools with test scores below the national norms. The lowest quartile, ranked by test scores, was 67% black and Hispanic and only 28% white. The top fourth of the schools, in contrast, was 85% white, 7% Hispanic and 2% black. By grade 3, about five of every six black and Hispanic students were in below average schools while 60% of whites were in above average schools. [21]

Similar patterns were found in the Chicago schools. Using graduation and dropout rates to gauge success, the Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance, an independent research group found that the overall dropout rate in the class of 1982 was 43%. For Hispanics, the figure was 47%, for blacks 45%, for whites 35%, for Asians 19%. About 47% of the graduates came from just 21 schools, and only one quarter of the students from these schools dropped out.[22]

At the other end of the spectrum, the 21 schools with the highest dropout rates accounted for 49% of all dropouts in the system. Their average dropout rate was 56%.

The authors of the study concluded that the Chicago public school system operates a two-tiered high school system which concentrates dropout-prone students into inner-city black and hispanic high schools.

Two reasons for the racial isolation of inner-city students are obvious and beyond the control of most school districts. First, minority residents are concentrated in minority neighborhoods; second, many white residents of central cities send their children to private schools, leaving few non-minority students to be "spread around." A third factor, however, over which districts do have control, is the multi-tiered system of high schools within many urban areas, which create a system of "triage."[23] The existence of competitive, elite high schools, whether academic or vocational, and the recent introduction of magnet schools have led to a documented "creaming" effect, which concentrates the vast majority of minority students into the "comprehensive" high schools.[24]

When magnet schools and other elite programs recruit and screen students, they ensure their success at the expense of the system as a whole. For example, the screening process in the Milwaukee magnet schools effectively eliminated poor minority students from the program. Although each of the special schools had to have at least 44% minority students, the students getting through the screening were overwhelmingly not poor. These schools scored well on tests primarily because they were enrolling students from families with stronger economic and educational backgrounds, not because they were transforming urban education. Magnet schools in other large cities also tend to have relatively few low-income students.[25]

Thus, policies intended to make a portion of the urban schools attractive to middle-class families of all races have the effect of further concentrating poor students, most of whom are minority, within schools with severe underachievement.

## STRUCTURES OF FAILURE

The process of concentration and isolation of poor and minority students continues within the walls of the schools as tracking, ability grouping and remedial pull-out programs create a movable mosaic of internal segregation. Perhaps more important, these programs and the pedagogy of discipline directly contribute to the culture of failure that exists in the schools and the urban communities from which they draw.

Virtually every American school separates students into ability groups in the lower grades and differing "tracks" in high school.[26] This practice represents a further concentration and isolation of minority students and those from the lowest socioeconomic groups. Within virtually every school in the nation the poor and members of minority groups are again disproportionately concentrated in classes at the lowest track levels, while children from upper socioeconomic groups are consistently over represented in higher tracks.[27] Similarly, minority students are drastically under represented in the upper-echelon programs.[28]

More important, tracking and academic groupings are a life sentence for continued failure for some students. As Henry Levin explains:

> First, it stigmatizes them with a mark of inferiority and reduces learning expectations both for them and their teachers. Such students are viewed as slow learners and treated accordingly with negative consequences for student esteem and performance.
>
> Second, by deliberately slowing the pace of instruction to a crawl, a heavy emphasis is placed on endless repetition of material through drill and practice. The result is a school experience that lacks intrinsic vitality, omits crucial learning skills and reinforcement and moves at a plodding pace.
>
> These two characteristics mean that the disadvantaged child gets farther and farther behind the educational mainstream the longer that he or she is in school. That is, the very model of remediation is one that must necessarily reduce educational progress and widen the achievement gap between advantaged and disadvantaged children.[29]

Separate from tracking but closely related in its effect on student performance are the remedial programs which pull students out of regular classrooms to visit specialists. This disrupts their regular educational agenda, stigmatizes the students and separates them from their peers.

The inequity inflicted in the name of equity in both tracking and pull-out programs is worsened by the facts that schools do not focus on the gap per se and there is no time limit established for closing the achievement gap and bringing disadvantaged youngsters into the educational mainstream.[30]

Closely related to these inequitable practices is the way in which advancement policies and school discipline are applied with disproportionate results for urban, minority students. Minority school populations generally have retention rates three to four times higher than those of majority school populations, and some research has pointed to recent increases in non-promotion that fall most heavily among minorities.[31] There is little evidence, however, that retention improves the achievement of students in either the short or long run. Instead, for most students, being held back results in stigma, low self-esteem, lack of

interest in extracurricular activities and waning motivation.[32] Furthermore, it is one of the strongest factors explaining school dropout rates.[33]

Suspensions tend to be used three times as often with black students as with whites, with black males being particularly vulnerable. In 1982, blacks accounted for 16% of student enrollment, but received 31% of suspensions and 28% of corporal punishments.[34] Again, research suggests that most suspensions are not a consequence of serious offenses but rather of teachers' overreactions to the behavior of minorities.[35]

There is strong evidence that educators' own expectations for their students are a major contributing factor to their students' achievement. Moreover, lowered expectations of ability and achievement appear to be endemic to schools that serve poor and minority students.

The complex role of expectations, class background and pedagogy were explored in Jean Anyon's 1979 study of the 5th-grade classes of five different New Jersey schools.[36] Three of these schools were located in an industrial city and two were in one of its affluent suburbs. Of the three urban schools studied, she identified two as working class and one as middle class. The students in these schools were predominantly white, and yet even they received an education markedly different from their peers in the more affluent community. Anyon found:

> *In the two working-class schools (school)work is following the steps of a procedure. (In contrast), in the middle-class school, (school)work is getting the right answer. . . (I)n the affluent professional school, (school)work is creative activity carried out independently, (while) in the executive elite school, (school)work is developing one's analytical intellectual powers.*[37]

Overall, Anyon found that as the social class of the community increased, the following also increased:

- o The variety and abundance of teaching materials in the classroom.
- o The time reported spent by teachers on preparation.
- o The stringency of board of education requirements regarding teaching methods.
- o The frequency and demands of administrative evaluations of teachers.
- o Teacher support services, such as inservice workshops.
- o Expectations of student ability by parents, teachers and administrators.

This picture of pedagogical inequity is rounded out by Michelle Fine's study of a South Bronx high school in which she found that students need to earn the opportunity to be critical, participate and to work collectively. She observed that "smart kids" get to participate, "remedial kids" get to memorize; "smart kids" get to work in groups, "remedial kids" are accused of cheating; "smart kids" are creative, "remedial kids" are right or wrong.[38]

When schools approach large numbers of poor and minority students, they see failure in the making. In treating them as failures they create failures. Their low expectations and remedial methodology, while based on what teachers and administrators think is helpful, in fact become self-fulfilling prophecies. This is argued cogently by Jeannie Oakes:

*It is important to keep in mind at this point that . . . low-track students do not seem to have lower self-concepts and aspirations or to inspire negative judgments in their peers and teachers just because they are poorer or less bright than students in other tracks or because they themselves had more negative attitudes to begin with. While these things might be true, a good portion of the negative attitude displayed by low-track students is attributable to the track placement itself.*[39]

Schools and the Student's Culture

Schools do not treat the cultural differences of minority students as legitimate variations in background from that of the white middle class student for whom schooling was designed, but as indications of lesser abilities. Urban schools have a hidden curriculum and pedagogy which unnecessarily contributes to failure of their poor and minority students. This curriculum and pedagogy are described by Michelle Fine as the process of silencing and pathologizing.[40]

Schools "silence" the poor or minority student by refusing to address the real concerns of students and by relying on a pedagogy of remediation and drill rather than of discourse and discussion. Schools guarantee their student's non-participation by avoiding questions such as the structures of class, race, gender and disability stratification, the stigmatization of sexual minorities, the politics of gentrification, the drama of domestic violence, the details of drug sales and busts, tenant organizing, sexual activity and AIDS.[41]

The culture of American public schooling is most familiar and comfortable to those who already have succeeded in the economic system but often perceived as alien by those who are cut off from the economic and social mainstream. In general, schools actively promote this majority culture while turning the strengths of minority and poor students and communities into problems that impede schooling. The process of devaluing potentially legitimate skills, experiences, talents, energies, critiques and dreams that children bring to school from their homes and communities is what Fine describes as "pathologizing." Instead of building on a culture of cooperation, schools replace it with a culture of competition and individualism and even denigrate cooperation as cheating. Instead of praising and accommodating the student who must stop out of school to help take care of a sick family member or help support younger siblings, these actions are seen as part of the problems that schools must heroically overcome.[42]

The Role of the Dominated-Minority Status in Failure

Power and status relationships between the majority and minority groups in society exert a powerful influence over the performance of students in schools.[43] Students from cultural minorities who are disfavored by the dominate society tend to fail and underachieve just by virtue of their dominated status. Ironically, when members of the same cultural minority group are in a situation where they are favorably viewed by the dominate society they do well in school.

This point has been proved in the context of international data on minority group achievement. One example is the academic failure of Finnish students in Sweden, where they are a low-status group, compared to their success in Australia where they have high status. Outcast Burakumin perform poorly on IQ tests in Japan, but do as well as other

Japanese students when they live in the United States. Efforts by researchers to explain these patterns and those of differential minority achievement in the United States point out that widespread school failure does not occur in minority groups that do not perceive themselves as inferior to the dominant group and that are not alienated from their own cultural values. In contrast, minority groups characterized by widespread school failure tend overwhelmingly to be in a dominated relationship to the majority group.[44]

A striking example of the effects of domination is provided by the classroom experiments of Jane Elliot.[45] In order to teach her all-white rural Ohio classes about racism, she undertakes an annual two-day exercise in which she gives some students the opportunity to be superior to others for a day based on their eye color and reinforces it with her own behavior. The next day she reverses the power and importance of the groups. She has consistently observed that the "oppressed group" exhibits postures, expressions and entire attitudes of defeat while their classroom work regresses sharply from that of time when they were treated equally. To document the effect on achievement, she gives students an informal test two weeks before the exercise and then tests them again each day that the exercise takes place and two weeks after it ends. Almost without exception, she finds that students' scores go up the day they're on top. They go down the day they're on the bottom and they stay up after the exercise.

Ironically, the results of domination appear as characteristics of students and their families which predispose them to failure. The dominated status of a minority group exposes them to conditions that work against school success even before they come to school. These conditions include limited parental access to economic and educational resources, ambivalence toward cultural transmission and primary language use in the home within the minority group, interactional styles that may not prepare students for typical teacher-student interaction patterns in schools [46] as well as internalized expectations of failure at the game of school.

An ethnographic study by John Ogbu shows how a sense of alienation from the dominant culture contributes to school failure in Stockton, California.

Ogbu concluded:

> *. . . blacks, from generations of experience, realize that they face a job ceiling; therefore, they develop a variety of coping responses that do not necessarily enhance school success (such as joining the culture of the street). The other is that the fact of segregated and inferior education has resulted in an abiding antagonism and distrust between blacks and the schools; this sort of relationship must make it difficult for blacks to accept and follow school rules of behavior conducive to achievement.*[47]

Long-term cumulative failure, which results in large part from the inability of urban schools to provide an education that engages, stimulates, excites and meet the needs of urban youth, breaks the backs, the minds and the souls of youngsters. It promotes, not only the high levels of underachievement, low esteem, inflated truancy and dropout rates which are the hallmarks of urban schools, but it also feeds their distrust of the system. This in turn promotes an alienation that leads students to withhold from themselves and the system what they could do if school were not seen as their enemy.

That the best may be leaving, and the ones remaining ill served, is suggested by Dade

County achievement data on Iowa tests. In the feeder pattern of a particular black high school, minority elementary students achieved at a 40-45% level, minority junior high students at a 30-35% level and minority high school students at a 20-25% level. Thus while 40-60% of these students are dropping out of the system, the remaining students do less and less well.[48]

## PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND THE ECONOMY

The American economy is in a period of transition; traditional economic relationships have been upset, but the future is uncertain. The character and distribution of work is changing drastically at the same time that the number of new workers entering the labor market is shrinking and their demographic characteristics are shifting. Thus, at the very moment that the economy is undergoing an epochal realignment, the young workers who must become the foundation of the developing economy are increasingly coming from groups, particularly urban minorities, which have never before participated in leading the development of the American economy. These conflicting trends in economic development and manpower demographics have led analysts to draw differing and, frequently, alarming scenarios for the future of the economy.

Because the connection between public schooling and national economic policy is one of long standing, the question of education reform has been swept up into confusion and crystal-ball gazing over the economy. Two areas of the debate among economists have become important to the development of education policy for urban schools. First, the present state of the economy and the near-term prospects for job creation offer little hope or motivation for urban minority youth. The already bleak job outlook for these students only grows more dismal as skilled manufacturing jobs decrease and the growing service sector locates new jobs outside of the inner city. Second, the movement in education reform that views the restructuring of public schools as the primary lever for national economic reform is misconceived. In so far as supporters of this movement claim to have an effective program to address the urban school crisis, they are promoting a dangerous illusion which will consume vital energy and resources to little or no effect.

### Jobs, Students and the Economic Reality

In many respects, the discussion of the economic prospects of high school graduates is the logical completion of the background portrait of the current situation in the schools. Moreover, it is widely believed that job preparation is a primary purpose for public schools and the most compelling motivation for its students. But what is generally believed and what actually occurs may be very different. For the majority of urban students, the near-term job outlook offers little to spur academic achievement. Thus, any school reform program that relies primarily on a philosophy of economic preparation and motivation risks failure at the outset.

A review of the trends in the contemporary economy shows that, contrary to many claims, the high-technology sector is not now providing large numbers of interesting, well-paid jobs.[49] Presently, most job growth is in occupations requiring relatively low levels of skills, offering inadequate salaries for the support of families and located outside central cities. The prospect is that this trend will continue or accelerate in the future.[50] An influential 1983 study states that:

> *Employment growth for the economy as a whole will favor low- and middle-level occupations. While employment in professional and technical occupations is expected to increase by 20% for the 12-year period, this growth rate is lower than in either of the two preceding decades. . . .(G)overnment estimates suggest that employment growth will favor jobs that require little or no training beyond the (current) high school level."*[51]

It is important to note that these projections of dual track economic development made in the early '80s were reiterated in 1986 by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and that evidence on family and individual earnings bear them out.[52] This is painfully documented by the recent report of the William T. Grant Foundation entitled The Forgotten Half: Non-College Youth in America. The following is a brief summary of its findings on the economic opportunities experienced by recent entrants to the labor market:[53]

> *Stable high-wage employment in manufacturing, communications, transportation, utilities and forestry that was once open to young people leaving high school is rapidly declining. For male high school graduates under age 20, employment in these high wage sectors fell remarkably from 57% in 1969 to 36% in 1986. In manufacturing alone, employment for under age 20 male graduates fell by half, from 44% to 22%.*
>
> *Currently it takes two retail sector jobs to equal the wages of one lost manufacturing job. For young male high school graduates, employment in the retail trades and services now provides 48% of their jobs, up from only 30% in 1968.*
>
> *The real median income of young male workers has plummeted by about one-fourth in just over a decade. Between 1973 and 1986, the real mean annual earnings of 20-24-year-old civilian males with high school diplomas fell 28.3%. For whites, the figure was 24.4%, for blacks, 43.8% and for Hispanics 34.5%. For dropouts the figures were worse, 42.4% for whites, 60.6% for blacks and 27.3% for Hispanics.*
>
> *In 1974, 46% of all jobs held by black males ages 20-24 were blue-collar, craft and operative occupations -- at wages usually sufficient to support a family. By 1986, only 12 years later, the percentage of young black men holding such jobs had fallen to only 25%.*
>
> *Far fewer youth, even with high school diplomas, are now able to obtain full-time year-round employment. In March 1986, nearly 75% of all male high school graduates under age 20 and not attending college were working. However, only 65% of these young male workers held a full-time job. Overall, less than 49% of America's non-college bound high school graduates were working full time one to two years after receiving their diplomas. By contrast, in March 1974, 73% of all male graduates held full time jobs.*
>
> *Among black high school graduates under age 20 and not enrolled in college, only 49% were working, and, of those, only 45% were employed full time. In other words only one of every five black graduates was able to find full-time employment. Only one in eight black high school dropouts were able to find full-time employment.*

While advances in educational attainment have meant higher incomes for individuals relative to what they might expect with lower levels of education, the report concludes that advances in educational attainment cannot compensate for the deterioration in real earnings of young workers that have characterized the American economy since 1973. The overall result is that the gap between the wealthiest and poorest citizens is now larger than at any time since such data were first collected in 1947.[54]

Race, Sex and the Urban Economy

Aggravating these macroeconomic trends are the ways in which this overall scenario is played out with respect to race and sex and in the central cities. Even as the overall job opportunities for non-college-bound high school graduates deteriorate, data make it quite clear that men fare better than women and whites fare better than minorities. Worst off of all are minority women. For example, among persons who have earned a high school diploma, 8% of white males live in poverty, compared to 11% of white females, 17% of black males and 31% of black females.[55] Clearly, equal educational credentials do not necessarily result in equal employment for minorities and women. Better education credentials do significantly improve an individual's chances within a demographic group, but they do not generally elevate the job opportunities of women to those available to men or of minorities to those available for whites.

The data on disparate opportunities based on race, ethnicity and gender suggest that if all minority students from poor neighborhoods stayed in school through graduation their employment opportunities and long-term work prospects might not improve very much.[56] And the fact is that urban kids are wise to the fact that the economy has little to offer them. Researcher Michelle Fine cited the example of Ronald who, at 18, is in the 10th grade and a likely candidate for dropping out.

> "You know why I stay in school? 'Cause every morning I see this guy, this same drunk in the subway station. And I think, 'not me. I'm staying in school.' But then I think, 'I bet he has a high school diploma.'"[57]

Just as women and minorities are faring worse than white males within the overall framework of declining opportunities, residents of central cities, where the majority of minority citizens and households headed by women reside, are facing particularly difficult economies. Job losses in most major northern cities have been greatest in industries with low educational requirements, and job growth which has been concentrated in industries that require more than a high school education has not offset it. The result is that total employment in most of these cities has generally declined.[58] Finally, employment data shows that "essentially all of the national growth in entry-level and other low education-requisite jobs have accrued in the suburbs, exurbs and non-metropolitan areas far removed from the growing concentrations of poorly educated urban minorities."[59] In other words, dropouts can't find jobs, graduates find jobs with low wages, and real opportunities seem reserved only for those who go beyond high school and fit into the downtown culture.

A Proposal for Economic Restructuring

The underlying economic problems that are reflected in the bleak trends in employment opportunity are rooted in the fundamental structure of the national economy as it is challenged by a change in the world economic order. Politicians, corporations and economists have proposed a variety of national responses to the present situation. One coalition of business and political interests has developed a strategy of using national education reform as a lever to restructure the troubled national economy. Significantly, supporters of this argument claim that it provides an effective policy to address the crisis in the worst urban schools. Because this movement has woven together economic restructuring and education reform, its success depends on the wisdom of the underlying

strategy promoting economic change as much as it does on the value of any of the proposed educational techniques or institutional changes.

The declining vitality of the American economy which is evident in the trade deficit, the budget deficit and the predominance of speculative, rather than productive, investment has led many concerned observers to place efforts to renew the competitiveness of the economy at the center stage of both economic and education reform. As exemplified in the Task Force report of the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, A Nation Prepared, this argument equates the performance of public schools with the future of the national economy. Briefly, the argument is that as manufacturing, once the engine of the first world's growth, moves to the developing countries of the third world in search of cheaper labor, the United States faces a stark choice: become a leader in the competitive and volatile world of new product and new process development or see the standard of living decline as the low end of the service sector dominates new job formation. Having posed this dichotomy, the Carnegie Task Force asserts that in order to proceed along the first path, the nation must revamp its educational system which, in their view, is incapable of producing the employees needed for a competitive, technologically sophisticated and rapidly changing economy. [60]

Thus it is argued that schools must prepare students for the technology of the future which will require that universally high standards be achieved by all students. The report and its proposals focus not on the needs of the students, but rather on complementing a national response to a changing world economy.

The Task Force holds out a vision of a world of clean, challenging high-tech jobs which will be available to all if only the education system produces the appropriate quantity and quality of graduates. This positive future is counterposed to a negative one dominated by low-level work. Unfortunately, analysis of the actual structure of the economy and its high technology sector suggests that these roads are not alternative futures, but coexisting aspects of a dual economy which is already in place.

## The New Economic Model: A Futurist's Dream

The assumptions about the American economic future made by the Carnegie Task Force and other reformers draw heavily on the literature of economic restructuring. The essence of this approach is that the creation of a new economic order is not simply a question of creating new sectors or of importing high technology into existing ones, but, rather, of increasing the responsiveness, flexibility and problem-solving capacity of the entire economy in order to increase productivity and regain competitiveness.[61] While doing this may involve the use of the capacity of new technology for rapid and efficient information processing and other activities, the major emphasis is placed on the human side of the equation, on the necessity of engaging all employees and their knowledge in the process of decision making, problem solving and quality control.

This approach criticizes the current hierarchical, top-down management structure of work as inefficient and, even, counterproductive because it sets employees against management and company goals rather than engaging their energies, ideas and loyalty in the service of a mutually beneficial outcome. In this view, productivity and growth will result when all employees have opportunities to participate in the decision-making and problem-solving process and are offered incentives to do so. Experience with quality circles here and abroad has indeed shown that much can be gained from these changes. But this experience

also shows that the process requires commitment, energy and a dramatic change in business as usual on the part of management and workers.[62]

Most of the discussion in education policy circles has focused on the ways in which workers must change. It is argued that if worker-participation structures are to become the norm, employees will indeed need new skills and competencies. A capacity for cooperative work, dialogue and consensus building will be essential. And all workers must be adept in posing problems, investigating alternatives, evaluating possible outcomes and imagining unfamiliar possibilities.

Because these are skills that current educational practices actually work against, it is tempting to assert that schools must change in order to move the economy in this new direction and reap the rewards of increased productivity from human capital. The allure of this approach is obvious. It offers a future that not only raises the standard of living but does so by improving the quality of work. It is optimistic and democratic in outlook and fits well with conservative notions of supply-side solutions to economic problems. The answer to the economic dilemma seems apparent: if schools produce an abundant supply of intelligent, flexible, creative workers, then work will naturally evolve to make use of them.

Unfortunately, it is precisely this reliance on supply-side thinking that undercuts the vision, making it little more than an interesting exercise in futurist thinking, at best, and a policy prescription for disaster, at worst. For what it ignores is the central role that management and stockholders must play in restructuring the organization of work and changing the terms under which business is conducted.

The Carnegie Task Force states that the economy of the future is a "knowledge-based economy" and that the new workers must be:

> *"People who have the tools they need to think for themselves, people who can act independently and with others, who can render critical judgment and contribute constructively to many enterprises, whose knowledge is wide-ranging and whose understanding runs deep."*[63]

Presently, within business and industry, decentralized worker-based management and increased worker compensation, or more to the point, professional-style worker ownership structures such as partnerships or professional corporations do not exist. Indeed, when these measures have been proposed in the past they have met with strong resistance from both owners and management. Thus, any economic reorganization on the professional model such as that advocated for schools would require a radical change of philosophy and practice by those in charge of business and industry. Such a radical change at the top will not be brought about merely by an infusion of new talent at the bottom.

More than likely, just as in the current economy, increased productivity will hinge less on how skilled janitors, clerical workers and retail clerks are than on how well management organizes the work place and engages their energy to elicit the greatest productivity, innovation and creativity. This is demonstrated by innumerable examples of spurts of productivity obtained through reorganized work even when the skills of the workers remain unchanged. Perhaps the most dramatic examples come from the turnaround of plants which take place when Japanese management and production techniques are applied to previously inefficient and ineffective American plants and workers.[64] This does not imply that the skills of workers are unimportant or that dramatic changes in skills are not needed. But it does suggest that improvements in workers' skills will be insufficient to generate economic

change in the absence of dramatic improvements on the side of management. The inadequacy of supply side approaches to economic development is also demonstrated by the waiting lists for jobs facing college graduates in Europe and third world countries. In each case the increased educational levels of students have failed to generate high level jobs which can employ them.

When industry and corporate America shows itself willing to open its internal processes to substantive input by its employees and to offer work that is rewarding and interesting, there will exist a meaningful economic stimulus for individuals to stay in school and pursue complex skills. There will also be a compelling social reason for school systems to change their way of doing business. Until that time, which continues to appear quite far off, it will be necessary to find other sources of motivation for youngsters who see an uncertain, unrewarding and uninteresting economic future in contemporary mainstream America. It will also be necessary to find other ways to motivate teachers and administrators who have good reason to believe that the economy still wants a large number of workers for uncertain, unrewarding and uninteresting jobs.

## Economic Policy and School Reform

There is no doubt that even the lowest-level jobs being generated in this economy require higher skills than the low-level jobs generated in the past. And there is even less doubt that the vast majority of inner-city youth are not prepared for these jobs whether they drop out or graduate from school. Certainly, inner-city youth need more skills and a better education just to fit today's economy and today's jobs. But it is overwhelmingly obvious that existing jobs at the low end of the ladder are not an adequate incentive for remaining in school and joining the system.

The implication is striking. The economy as it now exists and as it is likely to develop is incapable of motivating students toward academic success. For complex reasons, many having to do with the structures of failure and alienation that are perpetuated by urban schools themselves, large numbers of black, Hispanic and American Indian youth are unwilling to see a clerking job in a corporate financial center as an acceptable life option. This is forcefully documented by the failure of the much publicized Boston Compact to have any impact on the dropout rate of the Boston Public schools. After four years of an unparalleled track record in job placement and the guarantee of an entry-level job in major businesses to all Boston public high school graduates, the program has been unable to convince more kids to stay in school.[65] Not surprisingly, outside evaluators have found that many of the jobs are low-wage positions with few intrinsic rewards and no obvious future.

That they prefer the dangers of the street and the ignominy of welfare poverty to schools and entry-level jobs is minority youth's way of saying that mainstream culture can go to hell. Indeed, it would be foolish to think otherwise. They know, because the schools and society have taught them, what many corporate professionals and educators refuse to acknowledge: that rewards worth trying for do not exist for everyone, and they are least likely for a young minority man or woman.

Failure in school coupled with a street sense of the limits offered by the "straight" economy and society drives large numbers of inner-city youth into the arms of the ghetto counterculture of drugs, numbers and gangs. Although it offers only evanescent rewards at high risk, the street culture does provide a place with the illusion of belonging.

The immense problems that this process creates are more political than economic. There is little reason to believe that the economy will not be able to find some other way to get its work done if inner-city youth won't do it. Labor shortages are something that markets know how to resolve. Be it through automation or immigration, the odds are high that adjustments will be made. It is less easy to be sanguine about the political dangers posed by a totally disenfranchised segment of the population. There is no invisible hand which will magically reweave the social fabric and no series of checks and balances that will soothe the anger of discontent. Solutions to our political problem of alienation and disenfranchisement require a more active and more personal effort to bridge the gap.

Difficult as it may be, schools must be in the forefront of this effort. The essential task that they must assist in is the re-creation of a community that has the power to attract and hold young people, even as it cannot promise them a rosy future of economic security. Educators must look beyond the marketplace in defining the mission of the public schools and, instead, create schools and help create communities which offer a positive alternative to street culture.[66]

Unfortunately, the approach that schools have taken to date does not deal with the problems of communities in crisis, but rather focuses on narrowly defined problems in the technology of education.

## THE CURRENT STATE OF REFORM IN SCHOOLS

Because of the widespread perception of a national crisis in education, educators and politicians have begun to cast about for new approaches to the management of schools and to rethink the traditional type and approach to the delivery of services. These reform efforts vary according to local perception of educational and social needs and are based on a variety of theories. But in general, they tend to be piecemeal, attacking a specific problem area rather than attempting broad-based reform.

### System-based Reform

System-based reform efforts include the school improvement programs and district-wide curriculum programs inspired by the effective schools movement, and various special programs, such as magnet and alternative schools. While these programs are very different in curriculum and pedagogical approach, they all operate within the traditional bureaucratic structure of urban school districts and are intended to improve performance measured by objective criteria.

The effective schools and effective teaching research has given rise to two very different movements: school improvement programs and districtwide curriculum and inservice programs.[67] While they are inspired by the same research, these two approaches are theoretically worlds apart. The former seeks to tap the energies of teachers by involving them in a new decentralized managing process, while the latter seeks to impose a formal equity on all students in a system by stringently controlling curriculum, teaching styles and testing.

Relying on evidence in the school improvement literature that suggests the local school site is the critical locus of significant change, school improvement programs (SIPs) have been designed and implemented by local school staff to address building-wide issues such as student discipline, expectations for student achievement, increased learning time and staff consensus on school goals. SIPs seek to redistribute decision making and management powers within the school bureaucracy, but, to date, this approach has achieved far less envisioned.[68] Theoretically, these programs involve the decentralization of the power over curricular programming and performance objectives. However, in practice there has been little real redistribution of power and, consequently, very little has been done to change management practices, pedagogical style or student performance.

While district-wide curriculum objectives, aligning curriculum and student testing, promotional gates and districtwide inservice training in an instructional model have been inspired by the same effective schools research, these programs are narrowly designed to lock in curriculum, teaching styles and testing according to districtwide definitions of achievement. Thus they further concentrate the centralized power of the district bureaucracies and remove the little flexibility that remains to the classroom teacher.

There are three primary objections to these programs. First, by standardizing the curriculum and teaching style, the district plans deprofessionalize the teaching force. The reliance on professional knowledge and discretion is curtailed. Second, districtwide curriculum aligned to districtwide tests insures a focus on basic skills, on the mere mechanics of writing, reading and mathematics and the memorization of facts at the expense of complex skills such as problem solving, conceptual reasoning, creativity, collaboration and

high-level writing skills. Third, districtwide models assume that there is no meaningful diversity among students either in their styles of learning or the subjects that ignite their interest. By pushing a uniform curriculum, they guarantee that schooling does not respond to the immediate concerns and interests of children.

Isolated Alternatives

In contrast to the districtwide programs, magnet schools and alternative schools provide a discrete group of students with a program of education that is different and physically isolated from the universal schooling offered the vast majority of students. The schools' differences can be variously defined along the lines of a particular subject matter (e.g. arts, vocational or science curriculum) or educational philosophy. In all cases, these schools or isolated programs select only a few students from the normal pool and thereby create a hierarchy of schools within a district.

Magnet schools are usually the result of efforts to create a small number of "special" schools within urban systems. Almost uniformly, districts that create successful magnets give these programs unusual flexibility and often also grant preferential treatment in staffing resources and procedures.[69] While these schools are models of improvement, they serve only a small proportion of students in their districts and are viewed as elite institutions.[70]

Because magnet schools draw the most talented or motivated students from a district, there is a corresponding tendency to impoverish the pool of students attending the remaining schools. This is especially the case where the school is in any way selective in its admissions procedures. This "creaming" of the pool of talented and motivated students guarantees the success of the magnet at the same time that it removes an essential element from the student body of the other schools. The label "common school" ceases to mean a school for the general population and takes on the connotation of a school deprived of the exceptional or special, a school for the ordinary and bland.

Alternative schools are designed to offer a nontraditional educational environment to students for whom the general pedagogy and curriculum has failed. Typically, these are small programs for students identified as failures, as at risk of failure or as serious disciplinary problems.

Unfortunately, many alternative schools are dumping grounds for kids with disciplinary problems. With far too few exceptions, they have minimal educational goals and serve only to retain the student within the system until they reach the age of compulsory education or the normal age of graduation. This type of school is essentially punitive and educationally nonproductive. It is characterized by an emphasis on control, low expectations, low standards and a curriculum designed only for survival in the lower ranks of society.[71] Moreover, most alternative schools suffer from a lack of direction that derives from the alternative's isolation within the system and the pervasive belief that their students have limited potential.[72] In this case, the special school is on the lowest rung of the hierarchy.

While a few alternative programs for at-risk kids avoid these pitfalls and show promise,[73] the vast majority of even these are structured as pull-out programs and as such are problematic. Alternative programs are stigmatized within the educational system for serving failures and outcasts, contributing further to their inability to make serious headway with their students. And when, as is often the case, the vast majority of the students in

the programs belong to identifiable minority groups, these programs become a form of internal racial segregation. Finally, in many urban systems or schools, all students are at risk. In such a situation it is necessary to institute systemic reform rather than add on programs.

School-Community Linkages

A number of disparate programs have begun to offer a range of services beyond those traditionally provided by public schools. These programs are targeted at specific areas such as school readiness, teen pregnancy, drug abuse and job preparation, but they share a common interest in forging or strengthening the linkages between schools and their communities. These programs are not motivated by theoretical or principled concerns about the proper relationship of schooling to the society but, are driven almost instinctively to joint community-school solutions to pressing practical problems.

The formation of cooperative partnerships with businesses, social service agencies and community groups is an effort to widen the circle of responsible adults who are committed to young people. In many districts, partnerships are used to marshal resources, bring in outside expertise, provide services the district itself cannot provide and develop greater community support for local schools.[74]

Early childhood programs include extensions of kindergarten to all children, preschool programs and day-care centers. With few exceptions, most memorably Head Start, the focus on early childhood programming is quite new. While recent research indicates that Head Start was effective in preparing disadvantaged children for schooling, there is concern among researchers that the focus on early childhood education by public schools may take the form of extending existing primary school practices downward -- complete with curriculum objectives, set instructional procedures, standardized assessments of student progress and strict promotion policies.[75] Such an approach is inappropriate for the developmental level of young children and will succeed only in conveying ever earlier messages of failure to many children.[76] The challenge, instead, is to create programs that are child-centered and that also enhance the ability of parents to meet the needs of their own children.

In many instances, school-business partnerships have been the catalyst for renewed interest in education and public support for special programs for economically disadvantaged youth. School-business collaborations seek community support for improved education in the public schools and attempt to bridge the gap between youths' skills and employers' requirements while youth are still in school. The most consistent and central role played by business in most collaborations is providing youth with work opportunities after school, during the summer or after graduation. While some student workers eventually gain permanent employment status, there is usually no formal process for this advancement and only a limited number of students are involved.[77]

Despite a number of documented benefits, there are clear limits on the impact that school-business collaborations can have. The collaborations are not alternatives to regular educational programs; even the most highly developed and comprehensive programs are designed to complement institutional programs and services. While school-business collaborations can act as a catalyst for educational improvement, they alone cannot revitalize urban schools. For a variety of reasons, even those school-business collaborations that recruit from a disadvantaged student population are rarely able to make a substantial

difference for the most disadvantaged or at-risk students.[78] The promise of jobs alone has not been sufficient to overcome the alienation from the mainstream future which so many urban students experience.

School-social service agency collaborations were pioneered by the now widely replicated Cities-in-Schools program and have expanded to include efforts led by several foundations. The goal in these programs is to eliminate duplication of effort and to encourage the full utilization of social service resources. By linking the school to a wide array of services and by joining the efforts of the full range of service providers, they seek to create conditions under which students can more easily and completely pursue their education. While these efforts represent a step forward in addressing the needs of urban youth, the view of collaboration that they promote remains grounded in the notion that schools and communities are separable. To date, these programs are designed only to make it easier for schools to focus on their traditional role and do not otherwise reform the provision of educational services or the management of schools.

## The Current State of Reform: Possibilities and Limitations

There are both promises and limitations in the response of urban school systems and communities to the crisis of inner-city schools. Few programs reach all students at risk of failure, and the ones that do, such as districtwide curricula and testing and school improvement programs, are respectively counterproductive and without a record of successful implementation. Many of the alternative delivery systems offer the possibility of providing increased opportunity to a few, but in the case of magnets stigmatize the ones not selected and in the case of alternatives stigmatize the ones assigned. Early childhood programs offer an opportunity to increase the school readiness of young children, but some threaten to become an early exercise in failure. Lastly, collaborations with businesses and social services offer the chance to provide additional and desperately needed support services to youth, but themselves leave the actual processes of education untouched.

There are two major flaws with the current range of responses. First, they do not transform the institutional structures of schooling that promote failure and alienation or those that allow mediocrity on the part of teachers and administrators. Second, they do not represent any significant effort to overcome the intense alienation from schooling and mainstream culture that predisposes students to failure.

## Bureaucracy vs. Community

One major feature of contemporary schooling accounts for the unwillingness and inability of schools to respond effectively to student needs: the bureaucracy. Probably of no other contemporary social institution is it as true to say, the more things change the more they remain the same. Bureaucracy, of course, is everyone's whipping boy in education; teachers rail at it; parents demonstrate against it; taxpayers denounce it. Even bureaucrats complain about it and yet it lives on. The bureaucratic organization of schooling became widespread because it seemed to be the most practical way to solve the problems of rapidly growing school systems in the 19th century. But by the end of the 20th century, it has come to take on a life of its own, seemingly beyond the control of either the boards of education which oversee it or the superintendents who try to run it.

The first item on any agenda for urban reform, then, is the need to assert that public schools should be guided by and serve the educational purposes of the community rather than the self-serving purposes of the public school bureaucrats. This task is nothing short of Herculean, but unless it is engaged and accomplished, the best ideas for reform will be condemned to exist as pockets of excellence, sustained only by the heroic efforts of exceptional individuals. No social system can run on that fuel alone.

The need to break the bureaucratic stranglehold and to reestablish the community-school relationship is especially compelling in urban systems, where the community appears weak and the bureaucracy is seemingly omnipresent and omnipotent. As elsewhere, the primary goal of urban schools is to provide a place where caring, competent and autonomous adults can teach children. Everything else is secondary. The task of teaching inner city youth is special because of who the students are or "where they come from." The solutions for rebuilding inner-city schools will ultimately be found in the community, "where they come from."

## SCHOOL REFORM AND COMMUNITY RENEWAL

The crisis in urban education cannot be solved by merely improving the delivery of traditional educational and social services. Because its roots are to be found in the collapse of urban communities, the solution for schools and communities alike lies in renewing the school-community link and creating programs and institutions that address the vital needs of young people and the adults they live with. This does not mean that schools can become an all encompassing substitute for everything that youngsters need to grow up healthy, educated, skilled and mature. The process of leading a young child to adulthood is complex and beyond the resources of any single institution. Only when schools are part of a larger enterprise committed to raising and educating children as part of the community can they adequately fulfill their role.

The dilemma of urban schools is not unique in American history. The tenement filled cities spawned by the industrialization of the 19th century were similarly characterized by inadequate, unresponsive schools and a breakdown of the urban social life. In response to this crisis, the Progressive movement sought to reweave the social fabric of urban communities, choosing to focus on education and the schools as their primary tools for regeneration. For the Progressives, there was an inextricable relationship between social reform <u>through</u> education and the reform <u>of</u> education. They cast the school as a fundamental lever of social and political regeneration and as an adjunct to politics in realizing the promise of American life.[79]

The lessons of the Progressive era are important for the contemporary crisis. As inadequate as they are, schools are often the only functioning institution in the inner city. Schools and educators must once again lead the way in the process of rebuilding and renewing communities by rebuilding the community of interest in the school and in children and youth. The methods by which this can be realized depend on the particular circumstances of individual schools and communities, but at the core of any reform effort is the principle that schools must, first, teach by example and create model communities within their walls and, second, teach through leadership and practice by participating in efforts to renew the school-community connection. Taken together, these principles are the foundation of a program of community-wide education for democratic citizenship.

At the core of this approach is the idea that the political crisis of the schools requires a political agenda for reform. Just as the political system aspires to the substantive enfranchisement of all citizens, the overarching goal of public schooling must be the preparation of students for full participation in an active democracy and community. It is this goal that schools must embrace wholeheartedly if they are to successfully educate all students, regardless of their origins or their economic prospects. While only a few students, under present conditions, are destined to reach the highest tiers of the economic pyramid, all are guaranteed by the Constitution the privileges and prerogatives of citizenship.

The abstract notion of democracy and community currently offered in public schools is ineffective and hollow. Political homilies and dubious historical recitations are useless to youngsters living in the wretched conditions of ghetto neighborhoods. For the idea of education for democracy to be an effective strategy, it must take on a vital, immediate meaning within the context of students' lives. Preparation for democratic citizenship must be linked to the renewal of the political, social and economic life of their communities. Schools must rebuild themselves as functioning participatory communities that nourish the

self-esteem and skills of individual students. They must also actively engage in the task of rebuilding their connection to the community outside school.

There are practical and pedagogical reasons for this approach. As a practical matter, inner-city students have a multitude of real concerns in their lives. Most often these concerns and problems hold them back in school. But by converting them into the curricular focus of schooling, schools create a curriculum and pedagogy that is immediately compelling to the students. They gain their attention and can prepare them for the future.

Equally important, if schools are to take as their primary goal and justification the preparation of all students for democratic citizenship, they must adopt a curriculum and pedagogy appropriate to the subject. Democracy is engagement, a way of living among and with others. As such, it cannot be studied only as a theory but must be practiced and learned as a skill. Schools, to be successful, must provide the arena for demonstration and practice of democratic skills.

The two underlying problems of urban schooling -- unresponsive institutional structures and the extreme alienation of students from school and community -- can and must be addressed together. By focusing on a pedagogy of practical democratic education, carried out by involved teachers in small learning communities, and a curriculum that explores community life and issues, schools can respond directly to their students and their students' lives. By throwing the students into the study of issues that directly affect themselves and their communities, and by placing education in the service of community, schools can best teach the natural connection between learning and living.

These, then, are the philosophic underpinnings of a program of urban school reform founded in community renewal. But practical school reform is primarily a process of rebuilding thousands of institutions and such a process requires blueprints as well as principles. The process of rebuilding community schools takes place on three different levels:

1. Strengthening schools as community institutions
2. Reorganizing schools as functioning communities
3. Placing community at the center of study within the schools

These three categories describe the primary relationships between schooling and the concept of community. As with any holistic approach to a systemic problem, each practical step in a program of reform should be designed to support the overall goals and not merely be viewed as an action in a single category.

## Schools as Community Institutions

As noted previously, schools are often the only functioning community institutions in many urban neighborhoods. Schools and educators are viewed as being under siege. While this picture is accurate, the psychological view point must change. One must begin to see schools as the first outposts and staging grounds of a great community rebuilding campaign. This campaign must be fought using a variety of strategies: by taking the school into the community and by bringing the community into the school.

Schools must become the center of a broad-based community committed to education and learning. To make this possible, schools must provide staff and resources to organize and support school-community projects. A primary focus of this activity must be parent

education. This includes parent-school support activities and adult education in literacy and social and political skills.

The school building must be a community resource, open throughout the day and available for a multiplicity of uses. School is the natural emotional, political and cultural center of the neighborhood. It should offer recreation, after-school care, social services, summer activities and classes designed to include all members of the community.

Schools must respond to and serve the diversity within their neighborhoods. This diversity may take the form of different cultures, different learning styles, different interests or different needs. No ethnic or racial group is monolithic in its values and few neighborhoods are either. Schools must be structured in ways that respond to diversity, support it and blend it into a common framework of mutual tolerance. This in turn will help define the kind of school community that will be created.

Community members should be used as resources for teaching students, and every effort must be made to engage adults in the lives of children and the activities of the school. Volunteers and paraprofessionals living in the community are able to maintain the linkage between schools and communities after teachers have departed to their homes in other neighborhoods.

Teachers and students should become involved in community-renewal efforts and lend their expertise to initiating and maintaining community projects and organizations. This cannot be seen as an extra burden for teachers to assume, but should be built into the job description and school budget.

Schools must work with the business community to encourage businesses to adapt greater flexibility in the structure of work. Real community schools require time from responsible adults, and only business personnel policies can create the conditions that make it possible for most working adults to become involved in their schools. Such an approach properly places the schools' needs on the business community's agenda, asking for the appropriate contribution from that segment of the broader community and creating a bridge to bring essential managerial talent into the school community.

## Renewing the School Community

Schools must create models of community within their walls. The fundamental principle of successful reform is that the methods must mirror the goals. The current urban school environment is more akin to a factory than to any other social structure. In order to teach democratic community values and higher-order skills, educators must create a closely knit community of students and teachers which emphasizes active participation in decision-making and responsibility to others.

Central to this goal must be the reduction in size of the unit that is defined as a school. An important corollary is that teachers must see themselves in a dual role: that of teacher and that of adviser to students in desperate need of concerned and caring adults.

Schools must be run at the building level. Teachers must be given the power to manage schools and design educational strategies, as well as the responsibility for renewing the school-community bond. Over time, this power must be shared with members of the community. As schools move toward this goal, they should provide community members with

the information and skills needed to participate effectively and constructively in the decision making process.

Schools should experiment with involving community members in the evaluation of student performance and competence. This effort need not supplant, but only complement, existing evaluation methods. Bringing lay people into the assessment process involves them deeply in schooling and provides an alternative to the impersonal and abstract measures of progress offered by test scores.

Community as the Focus of Study

Community life and problems must become a primary focus of study, and community renewal should be an integral part of the curriculum. The goal is three-fold. First is to build a sense in students that they can change the conditions of their lives and contribute in important ways to the world in which they live. Second is to set the academic skills that schools are trying to teach within the context of life as it is lived and real issues. This context in turn is the motivation for acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary to solve the problems at hand. Third is to re-create a community of interest between the school and the community it serves.

To be successful in its community renewal efforts and important educationally, such a program must develop high-level research, analytical, problem-solving and communication skills. It is worth noting that any curriculum that seriously undertakes a study of the community will be a complex course of study. It will necessarily demand the use and mastery of a wide variety of intellectual and practical skills if it is to succeed. Thus this approach automatically merges subject matter that is compelling to the student with the skills that are most sought by education and economic reformers.

Schools and teachers must learn to see student differences rather than student deficits. The language, experience, skills and habits that students bring to the schools from their homes and communities should be valued and built upon rather than criticized and suppressed. The self-esteem of students can be built not only through activities that allow them to succeed in meaningful ways, but also through a communicated sense that who and what they are have intrinsic value.

The community that students should be helped to feel part of should be ever-widening. To that end schools must become more aggressive in making use of the educational resources of their communities. Cities, whatever their size, have enormous cultural resources untapped by schools. Businesses have tremendous expertise in the application of knowledge to concrete problems that can aid the instructional activities of schools. Moving beyond field trips, schools must create alliances that allow education to take place in a variety of locations and using a variety of "teachers."

## CONCLUSION

The crisis facing urban public schools is a crisis of community. All too frequently there are no institutions that command the respect or attention of young people. Schools do not offer a compelling curriculum while the economy offers few prospects of security and advancement. At the heart of the problem is the inner-city community of adults that has been decimated, leaving few who are capable of responding to the need for meaning and guidance in young people's lives.

Because the political will does not exist to eradicate poverty through welfare state strategies, educators must develop schools that operate in the current environment. The future is stark; at the present rate the nation is rapidly approaching the polarization envisioned by the Kerner Report of 1968. In the 1988 version, the two irreconcilable societies are divided not purely by race but on class and cultural lines. The social consequences of a permanent underclass forever barred from the mainstream society are no less terrible merely because race is not to be the sole criteria for membership. Educators will either learn to manage the scarce benefits that traditional schooling offers by ever more ruthlessly sorting students for success and failure or they can undertake the challenge of rebuilding the spirit and institutions of these communities.

The first option amounts to a surrender of democratic hopes and an admission that the future for youth will be founded on class struggle and not cooperation. The second option requires unparalleled commitments of energy, resources and good will. But it also seems the most in keeping with goals of sustaining democracy and nurturing independence and self-reliance.

The focus on creating and nurturing community through schooling is not necessarily at odds with the needs of the marketplace. While neither schools nor curriculum would be designed and organized to meet the immediate needs of industry, they would also not sort students for success, they would prepare students for employment requiring team work, inquisitiveness, resourcefulness and concern for the needs of others. In other words, community schools would be the ideal mechanism to prepare workers for the more democratic marketplace which, in the view of many, will better enhance national productivity and competitiveness.

Finally, it is important to note that even if schools are redesigned and funded adequately, they cannot transform the inner city on their own. Policies that address housing, health, income, child care and economic development issues are essential. Schools may be the center of the revitalization effort, but they must be part of a larger commitment to transform the central city and reintegrate it into national life.

The first step in the process of restoring the proper student-community focus to public eduction is to recast the debate. The concept of the healthy school as an integral part of its community, dedicated to the preparation of its students for participation in democratic life, must become an essential component of the dialogue of reform and renewal. The second step is to create opportunities and incentives for these new relationships to evolve. Regulations and policies that impede the emergence of the community school must be waived for those schools ready and willing to tackle the challenges of creating a truly community school, and additional incentive funding must be made available to facilitate and enable the transition. In the long run, states and districts must develop new relationships to local schools. The freedom to create a curriculum and environment appropriate to local

community needs must be granted in exchange for the school's accountability for actually making an educational difference in the lives of its students.

## FOOTNOTES

1. U.S. Department of Education, Dealing with Dropouts: The Urban Superintendents Respond, cites 50% as the average attrition rate in large cities across the nation. The Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance, in its report, Dropouts from the Chicago Public Schools, found school dropout rates as high as 63% in individual schools. An independent report on New York City dropout rates, undertaken by Aspira, Inc., Racial and Ethnic High School Dropout rates in New York City: A Summary Report, found a system wide average of 68% and rates of 72% and 80% respectively for blacks and Hispanics.

2. See Chicago Panel Report, above on reading levels of graduates and the recent experience of New York banks seeking to recruit from among high school graduates.

3. Gary Orfield, "Race, Income and Educational Inequality: Students and Schools at Risk in the 1980s," paper presented to the Council of Chief State School Officers, 1987, cited with permission of CCSSO; the William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship, The Forgotten Half: Non-College Youth in America (New York, New York, January 1988).

4. Michelle Fine and Pearl Rosenberg, "Dropping Out of High Schools: The Ideology of School and Work," Journal of Education, vol. 165 (1983), pp. 257-272. In this report, Fine included an ironic commentary on the personalities of students who drop out and those who don't. She said:

   "Students who dropped out were significantly less depressed, more likely to say 'my problems are due to poverty, racism and my personality,' more likely to say, 'If a teacher gave me a B and I deserved an A, I would do something about it,' and less likely to present themselves as 'socially desirable' -- that is, to conform -- than those students who remained in school.

   "'Good students,' those who persisted, were relatively depressed, self-blaming, teacher dependent, unwilling to take initiative in response to a mis-grade and endlessly willing to conform."

5. The theme of the recent work of William Julius Wilson. See The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass and Public Policy, (Chicago, Illinois: Chicago University Press), 1987.

6. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract, 1987, Table 35.

7. U.S. Bureau of the Census, General Social and Economic Characteristics, 1980, U.S. Summary, Tables 74 and 75.

8. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1987, Table 19.

9. U.S. Bureau of the Census, General Social and Economic Characteristics, 1980, U.S. Summary, Tables 149, 159.

10. Ibid., Tables 141, 151.

11. Wilson, The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass and Public Policy, p. 46.

12. Ibid., p. 49.

13. Ibid. In 1980, in the five largest cities (New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia and Detroit) only 15% of poor blacks lived in non-poverty areas, while approximately 20% lived in areas with 20% to 29% poverty, approximately 26% lived in areas with 30% to 39% poverty and approximately 39% lived in areas with 40% or more poverty. For Hispanics, 20% lived in non-poverty areas, 24% in areas with 20-29% poverty, 24% in areas with 30-39% poverty and 32% in areas with 40% or more poverty.

14. Ibid., p. 55

15. Phone conversation with Sue Hendricks of the Urban Institute March 29, 1988.

16. Ibid., pp. 56-68.

17. U.S. Bureau of the Census, General Social and Economic Characteristics, 1980, U.S. Summary, Tables 143 and 153.

18. U.S. Department of Education, Condition of Education, 1987 Table 1:27-2.

19. Allan Ornstein, "Urban Demographics for the 1980s: Educational Implications", Education and Urban Society 16:477-496 cited in Jeannie Oakes, Improving Urban Schools: Possibilities and Problems in Current District Reforms. (Santa Monica, California: Center for Policy Research in Education and the Rand Corp.), October, 1987.

20. Gary Orfield, "School Segregation in the 1980s: Trends in the States and Metropolitan Areas," Metropolitan Opportunity Project. Chicago: University of Chicago, July 1987.

21. Gary Orfield, "School Segregation in the 1980s: Trends in the States and Metropolitan Areas," Metropolitan Opportunity Project (Chicago, Illinois: University of Illinois), July 1987.

22. Chicago panel, Dropouts.

23. Chicago panel.

24. Ibid.

25. Gary Orfield, "Race, Income and Educational Inequality: Students and Schools at Risk in the 1980s," discussion paper prepared for the Council of Chief State School Officers, cited with permission of CCSSO.

26. John Goodlad, A Place Called School. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1984.

27. John Goodlad, A Place Called School, (New York: McGraw Hill), 1984.

28. The National Coalition of Advocates for Students found that in 1982 blacks accounted for 16% of student enrollment but only 8% of placements in gifted and talented programs. Fine, "Dropping Out."

29. Henry Levin, "Accelerating Schooling," paper presented to the Council of Chief State School Officers, 2987, cited with permission of CCSSO.

30. Ibid.

31. Carol Ascher, Trends and Issues in Urban and Minority Education, 1987, Eric Clearinghouse on Urban Education, (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University).

32. Cited in Carol Ascher, Trends and Issues in Urban and Minority Education, 1987. New York: ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education, Teachers College, Columbia University.

33. Chicago Panel.

34. Michelle Fine, "Dropping Out of High Schools."

35. Ascher, Trends and Issues.

36. Jean Anyon, "Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work," Journal of Education, 162 no. 1, Winter, 1980.

37. Ibid.

38. Fine, "Dropping Out."

39. Oakes, "Improving Urban Schools" p. 8.

40. Fine, "Dropping Out."

41. Ibid.

42. Michelle Fine, "Dropping Out of High Schools."

43. Jim Cummins, "Empowering Minority Students: A Framework for Intervention", Harvard Educational Review, vol. 56, no. 1, February 1986.

44. Ibid.

45. Education Week, April 6, 1988, pages 4 and 5.

46. Cummins, "Empowering Minority Students," page 22.

47. Ibid.

48. Based on information gathered in a recent visit to Dade County by ECS staff.

49. Russell, Rumberger and Henry Levin, "Forecasting the Impact of New Technologies on the Future Job Market," Project Report No. 84-A4, (Stanford, California: Center for Educational Research, Stanford University), 1984; and Henry, Levin and Russell Rumberger, "the Educational Implications of High Technology," Project Report No. 83-A4, (Stanford, California: Center for Education Research, Stanford University), 1983.

50. Ibid., and John Kasarda, "The Regional and Urban Redistribution of People and Jobs in the U.S.," paper prepared for the National Research Council Committee on National Urban Policy, National Academy for Sciences, 1986, cited in Wilson, The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass and Public Policy, William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship, The Forgotten Half: Non-College Youth in America, New York, January 1988.

51. Levin and Rumberger, "The Educational Implications of High Technology", pages 4-6.

52. George Silvestri and John Lukasiewicz, "Projections 2000: A Look at Occupational Employment Trends to the Year 2000", Monthly Labor Review, September 1987.

53. William T. Grant Foundation, The Forgotten Half: Non-College Youth in America, pp. 19-27.

54. Ibid.

55. U.S. Department of Labor data from 1983 cited In Michelle Fine, "Deinstitutionalizing Educational Inequity."

56. Fine, "Dropping Out of High School: An Inside Look," Social Policy, Fall, 1985.

57. Michelle Fine, "Dropping Out of High Schools."

58. Kasarda, "Regional and Urban Distribution," p. 39. Between 1970 and 1984, New York City lost 492,000 jobs requiring less than a high school education and replaced them with 239,000 jobs requiring more than a high school education. In Philadelphia the lower-level job loss was 172,000, the high-level job gain, 39,000. In Baltimore, the respective figures were 73,000 and 15,000. There were cities where new jobs outpaced lost jobs and even some, in the South and West where both sectors grew. But the only Northeastern city in the study where job gains outpaced job losses was Boston, a city unique in its recent economic growth.

59. Ibid., page 42.

60. The Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, Report of the Task Force on Teaching as Profession), A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century (New York: May 1986.

61. See for example, Robert Reich, The Last American Frontier, 1983.

62. Henry M. Levin "Improving Productivity Through Education and Technology," in Gerald Burke and Russell Rumberger, eds., The Future Impact of Technology on Work and Education (London: The Falmer Press); Henry M. Levin and Russell W. Rumberger, "Educational Requirements for New Technologies: Visions, Possibilities and Current Realities," Educational Policy, vol. 1, no.3, 1987.

63. Carnegie Forum, A Nation Prepared, page 20.

64. See Henry Levin, "High-Tech Rhetoric: Low-Skill Jobs," work in progress, February 1988. Also based on personal conversation with the author regarding the GM Toyota Plant in northern California and Honda at Marysville, Ohio.

65. Robert Schwartz and Jeannette Hargroves, "The Boston Compact," Metropolitan Education, Issue 2, Summer 1986.

66. Ann Bastian, et al., Choosing Equality: The Case for Democratic Schooling (Philadelphia: Temple University Press), 1985.

67. Rutter Purkey et al., "U.S. High School Improvement Programs: A Profile form the High School and Beyond Supplemental Survey ," Metropolitan Education, Issue 2, Summer 1986.

68. Ibid.

69. Rolf Blank, Survey of Magnet Schools: Analyzing a Model for Quality Integrated Education, prepared by James H. Lowry and Associates, Abt Associates, Inc. Subcontractor for the U.S. Department of Education, September 1983, cited in Jeannie Oakes, "Improving Inner City Schools."

70. Oakes, p. 40.

71. Robert Fizzell, "Soft Jails," mimeographed paper, 1985.

72. Ibid.

73. See Gary Wehlage, Robert Rutter, and Anne Turnbaugh, "A Program Model for At Risk High School Students," Educational Leadership, March 1987.

74. Oakes, p. 22.

75. Oakes, "Improving Urban Schools," p. 43.

76. See for instance, David Elkind, Miseducation, 1988.

77. The following discussion is based on a recent report by Public Private Ventures of Philadelphia. Public/Private Ventures, Allies in Education: Schools and Businesses Working Together for At Risk Youth, Fall 1987, "Summary and Conclusions".

78. Ibid., p. 3.

79. Lawrence Cremin, The Transformation of the School, Vintage Press, New York, New York, 1964, p. 88.

# APPENDIX A

# PROGRAMS LINKING SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES

by

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Parent Outreach

A. The use of outreach workers is part of a community-teacher alliance proposal in Milwaukee to restructure a local elementary school. The prospectus for the new Fratney School talks about outreach in the following way:

(T)he school itself has to assume partial responsibility to organize parent and community participation. We recommend the hiring of three parent literacy organizers, one black, one Hispanic and one white to reflect the racial makeup of the neighborhood and projected student population... Given the conditions of life many families face...we feel it is a necessary responsibility of the school to consciously organize parents to be involved in the school and the educational life of our neighborhood...The parent literacy organizers will work to develop a full range of literacy activities in the school and the community, including: coordinating and training parent classroom volunteers, planning social-cultural events which include both students and parents, helping parents establish positive homework environments and habits at home, encouraging parental participation in literacy classes, organizing tutorial relationships between siblings and between students and adults in the community and helping to assess the success of the school's reading and writing program by conducting surveys amongst parents as to how much children are reading and writing at home, their attitude toward reading, etc.[1]

The school has been approved by the Milwaukee Board of Education, but funding for the literacy organizers was not authorized.

B. The Family Study Institute of Lincoln, Illinois, has developed two programs for parents that teach them how to provide a home environment conducive to studying and supportive of school work. Parents meet in groups of 10 for three weeks and work through a curriculum developed by the institute. The principal, a teacher and two parents in each participating school are trained to implement the program. The trained parents are leaders of as many study groups as necessary to meet parent demand.

C. The Association of Community Based Education, based in Washington D.C., is a clearinghouse for adult literacy programs which address literacy needs in terms of the issues and problems of their students' lives. They often link education and community development activities, and their methodological approaches are nontraditional in order to meet the needs of those whom traditional education has failed. They are learner-centered, focusing on helping learners meet objectives they themselves set in response to their own needs. They are structured to be accountable to the people in the communities within which they operate; they are responsive to community aspirations, maintaining an active commitment to a mission of community development; they have integrated learning with the life and work experiences of the learner; and they are easily accessible because they offer low-cost services within community facilities.[2]

D. The Institute for Citizen Involvement of the Passaic County College of Paterson, New Jersey, has designed and created the Public Policy and Public Schools Program. The goal is to meet the need for a core of skilled parent and citizen activists to lead local school improvement campaigns and to provide local activists with high-level training in education issues. The program is an accredited, entry-level college course offered in community settings.[3] The curriculum covers administration and finance (governance, fiscal policy, equity and the urban financial crisis); performance data and school discipline (teacher and school definitions of discipline and what alternatives exist); student selection processes (the sorting, tracking and grouping of students and their

relationship to race and ethnicity); curriculum (a survey of present and alternative possibilities); testing (the analysis of testing strategies); and school improvement and parent involvement (effective schools research and the role of parents in school improvement).[4] The majority of students are minority, low-income women. By mid-1985, 425 students had completed the course, and many went on to active involvement in their communities' schools.

Curriculum and Service in the Community

A. The Inquiry Demonstration Project of the City of New York is a lab school for 12 Manhattan high schools. The focus of the project is to develop a curriculum and school structure that emphasizes critical thinking, analysis and research rather than the coverage of topics. The students are involved in selecting problem-oriented projects which usually connect what they are learning with problems which concern them. For example, one recent project involved studying the homeless. The emphasis was on identifying the central problems and issues. The students interviewed representatives of city and nonprofit agencies who provide services to the homeless and others critical of city policy. They also visited shelters and talked to residents. A second project focused on student health clinics within schools. Among those interviewed were school board members and city staff in charge of the program. In both cases the students left the classroom in search of information and answers and went beyond traditional conceptions of secondary school research projects.

B. The Institute for Democracy in Education is a teacher-organized, teacher-run association which supports its members in their efforts to democratize their classrooms and effectively prepare students for participation in democratic life. The institute is currently running a program entitled "Students Writing About Community Affairs." In this program, teachers work with students to identify community issues they feel are important. From an investigation of this issue springs the entire language arts (and often science, social studies, etc.) curriculum. The intent is for students to choose the issues collectively, do the research and write about it for publication. In several instances, the work of the students has had a major impact on community policy.[5]

   In this program, students make the decisions over both the content and the structure of their work. Equally important, these projects show students how to use language to promote the common good. They are writing about their work to influence public policy and to make their voices heard. What they are learning in school equips them to make an immediate difference in their lives -- it empowers them.[6]

C. Students in rural Georgia study the economic needs of their community and then create school-based businesses that serve multiple purposes. These include: (1) creating a profit-making enterprise that meets the unfilled needs of the community; (2) providing employment opportunities to students; (3) generating or attracting income-producing opportunities to the community; (4) providing a vehicle for entrepreneurial training and academic development and (5) having an impact on curriculum and other aspects of the school system.[7]

   The businesses that have been started in Georgia at the secondary level are varied. A day-care center, a feeder pig operation, a construction company, a quick print shop, a T-shirt printing shop and a sheep-raising operation have all been opened.[8] The founders

of this program believe that with some adaptation it could be readily transferred to urban areas.

D. The Barbara Taylor School, an independent elementary school and day-care center in Manhattan, serves low-income, minority students. The pedagogy of this school, developed in conjunction with the Institute for Social Therapy and Research, is based on an image of the child as a changer, not an object to be changed and molded. The school is committed, "to developing all students as leaders by providing them with the tools they need to change the conditions that keep them and others ignorant, victimized and impotent. . . . that involves taking a risk -- saying, 'something is wrong here and we have to figure out how to change it.'[9]

E. The Youth Community Service Project sponsored by the Constitutional Rights Foundation of Los Angeles has organized 22 schools to participate in its community service program. Their program challenges kids to examine communities, identify needs and develop and implement programs instead of merely requiring them to look through a list of agencies and choose one to volunteer for. In this program, kids can set up projects independent of any existing service agency. Involvement ranges from short term to long term, through existing agencies and entirely independent of them. The foundation's role is in maintaining support and training at individual schools. They organize conferences, retreats, leadership training, teacher training (monthly meetings), and city-wide activities. Teachers in the schools involved are trained to be effective community liaisons.

F. The East Bay Conservation Corps is a nonprofit work and education organization serving the East San Francisco Bay communities. Corps members are 18-24 and come from a variety of racial and ethnic groups. Where other such programs concentrate on disaster recovery work or projects in remote wilderness areas, EBCC's focus is on reclaiming the environments of regional parks and the inner cities. The corps houses a remedial education center for members and participates in human service projects for senior citizens throughout the East Bay.

Practice in Democracy.

A. The arguments for "school" units of small size is made persuasively by Tom Gregory in his book High School as Community. He cites extensive evidence of the benefits gained when all students and teachers know each other well and when there is continuity from year to year among members of the community. Gary Wehlage as well cites small size as a key factor in the success of pull-out programs for at-risk youth, while Ted Sizer believes it a key factor in "personalizing" education. Mary Anne Raywid cites it as one of the most positive lessons alternative schools offer for educating at risk youth.[10]

B. The list of advocates of democratic education for students is extensive.[11] The list of practitioners is somewhat smaller:

1. The Foxfire Program of Eliot Wigginton places tremendous responsibility on students for educating themselves and directing their projects.[12]

2. The Jefferson County Open High School is run through a town meeting structure open to all students. Throughout the school structure emphasis is placed on developing in students the capacity for responsibility for their own lives. In the words of Arnie Langberg, the founder of the school: "One of the major risks we

take is allowing the students the freedom to fail. This often entails students 'hanging around' the community and giving a bad impression of the school. We feel it is a necessary risk because the students must learn to take responsibility for their actions, and it is less likely they will do so if we prevent them from 'messing up.'"[13] Other alternative schools have similar structures and philosophies.

3. The members of the Institute for Democracy in Education of Athens, Ohio, are committed to expanding students' roles in their classrooms and to changing the overall structure of schooling to a focus on the democratic empowerment of students. Apart from the activities of individual teachers in their classrooms and schools, the institute has four strategies to expand their influence: (1) publish a newsletter (2) make available to others curricular materials for democratic education (3) hold workshops on democratic alternatives and (4) offer a summer institute for teachers on a yearly basis.[14]

4. The Public Education Information Network of St. Louis is a loose computer network of practicing educators dedicated to democratic education. With some 1,200 members, 300-400 of whom are active, the network offers a tremendous resource for exploring the state of the art of democratic education.

Teacher Empowerment and Parental Involvement

A. The current wave of education reform includes numerous proposals and pilot projects in school based management by teachers. The most well-known proposal is that of the Carnegie Commission Task Force Report, A Nation Prepared. Some of the most noteworthy experiments underway are found in Rochester, Miami and Pittsburgh and in the schools belonging to Ted Sizer's Coalition of Essential Schools. Experiments are waiting to be initiated in Washington State and Massachusetts. The goal of virtually all of these proposals and projects is to provide teachers with more control over their schools and classrooms. In a few, the explicit goal is the development of a school-based curriculum.

B. The idea of extending empowerment beyond the circle of professionals is explicitly adopted by members of the Institute for Democracy in Education and by the members of Rethinking Schools, a group of reform-minded educators in Milwaukee. Both groups see teacher empowerment as a springboard for the empowerment of students and parents. In particular, Rethinking Schools is dedicated to helping parents, teachers and students gain more powerful roles in determining school policies and practices.[15]

C. The National Center for Citizens in Education, with the help of a grant from the Revson Foundation, is working in District 15 of Brooklyn to establish a school-site governance council that involves both parents and educators. NCCE is deeply involved elsewhere in providing outside technical assistance to facilitate the transition to school site councils.

D. Training for parental participation in school policy issues at the district level is provided by the Institute for Citizen Involvement in Education in Paterson, New Jersey. (See above). Other parent advocacy groups include Parents United for Full Public School Funding in Washington D.C., Designs for Change in Chicago, the Citizens Education Center Northwest in Seattle and the Institute for Responsive Education in Boston.

Community Volunteers and Paraprofessionals

A. In Houston, the Volunteers in Public Schools program is a network of over 17,000 school volunteers. These individuals contribute to the school system in a variety of ways: kindergarten screening, speaking before classes and assemblies, assisting in the classroom and with after-school activities, business people on release time, senior citizens as "living historians," parents calling parents.

B. Paraprofessional community-based workers were first employed in the great settlement house projects of the early 1900s such as Henry Street in New York City and Hull House in Chicago. In the 1960s, programs developed around the country to train community residents in disadvantaged areas to work in schools and other community service agencies. The goals were two-fold: to meet staff shortages by freeing up the time of professionals and to provide a new approach toward employment and career development opportunities for disadvantaged minority workers, youth and women. In the latter case, many programs attempted to establish career ladders from entry level, easily learned tasks toward full professional status. They linked their career ladders to new programs in post-secondary institutions geared toward the needs of the working adult. Many advocates of these programs saw community-based paraprofessionals as necessary to bridge the growing lack of confidence between consumers of human services and the agencies that provided them.[16]

Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s the federal government served as a facilitator and enabler of the paraprofessional/new careers movement. The Community Action and Head Start Programs were leaders in the field. But one of the most comprehensive and effective projects was the Career Opportunities Program which over a seven-year period involved more than 20,000 people in career-advancement programs for aides who wanted to become teachers. This program officially ended in 1977 and was institutionalized in only a few local districts. Today few if any of the many human service programs which use paraprofessionals have provided structured career advancement opportunities.[17]

<u>The school as community center</u>

A. Since the 1930s the Mott Foundation has been supporting and advocating community education. It has established technical assistance centers in every state and helps support a national training center in Flint, Michigan. In collaboration with the New York Board of Education Mott has helped establish 10 schools as community centers, open to all members of the community, meeting a wide range of needs. Not surprisingly, Flint, the home of the foundation, boasts a systemwide network of community schools.

B. A variation on the theme of school as community center is the development of nonschool based community centers with activities geared toward both educational and non-educational needs. One example is found in the Inner City Schools Improvement Project of Memphis, Tennessee. Numerous community based programs are housed in the Martin Luther King Educational and Cultural Center, located in a very poor section of inner-city Memphis. The center provides programs in the following areas: parent education and training, home-based childhood education, after-school tutorials, after-school homework centers, non-tuition elementary remedial summer school, peer self-help substance abuse and teen pregnancy programs, Saturday scholars, role models, recreational programs, adult basic education, adult vocational-technical courses and services, computer education, a library and research center, a volunteer teacher force and a system-wide achievement team. The goal is to coordinate services for the community. The target community are the students, parents and other adults of a seven-school feeder system for the Booker T. Washington High School.

C. A second example is the Center for Successful Child Development, also known as the Beethoven Project, in Chicago. Located on the second floor of one of the 28 high-rise buildings in the Robert Taylor Homes housing project, the program operates on federal, state and foundation funds. Begun in late 1987, the program targets the population in the six buildings that feed into the Beethoven Elementary School. It provides such services as prenatal care to expectant mothers and pre-kindergarten for children. A nurse, mid-wife and pediatric practitioner are among the staff. The purpose is to coordinate and expand nutrition, education and health care services for the families in the area. There is also a research component that will follow the children through their elementary experience. The whole kindergarten class of 1992 will have had access to these services. The center is a spin off of the Ounce of Prevention Fund and is also supported by the Chicago Urban League. Significantly, at this point, it is totally independent of the school the children will be attending.

Using Urban Resources

A. The original model for the notion that the city itself can be the classroom comes from Philadelphia's Parkway program. No longer functioning, it nonetheless inspired other such schools, including the still active City-as-School in New York. The essential idea is that the program has no school building as such. Classes are held in city and state facilities, hospitals, businesses and educational institutions, private homes, churches and offices. Parkway's students were divided into four groups based in different parts of the city. Each had a regular meeting time with full-time accredited teachers and university interns. The staff taught about half the courses and supervised weekly tutorials. Community volunteers with special skills offered on-site programs and internships in academic, commercial and vocational subjects.[18]

B. A somewhat different approach is taken by the Partnership Project of the St. Louis school system. In this program, six paid staff people work with teachers to bring community resources into the classroom to help teachers meet their curricular objectives. Business, cultural institutions, governmental agencies, professional and community groups and universities throughout the city have sponsored Partnership programs since its 1979. Examples of Partnerships include: Architects assisting in the teaching of geometry by running design projects for students which emphasized lines and angles; insurance actuaries providing instruction in mathematics based on the daily problems they solve in their work; and writing skills taught by journalists, newspeople and public relations specialists who pose the problem of the written word in terms that come from their daily work. In all cases, teachers initiate the request for help and have the final say on what goes on in their classrooms. Most Partnerships involve between two and 12 sessions taught by employees of the sponsoring organization.

Serving Diversity

A. Perhaps the most well-known mechanism for serving diversity is a system of choice within which parents must choose their child's school from an array of differentiated schools. The most full-blown example of this kind of system is found in District 4 of New York, where all elementary and junior high schools are schools of choice. Significantly, the number of "schools" far exceeds the number of buildings.

Impelled by desegregation concerns, several school districts in Massachusetts, including Cambridge, Fall River and Lowell, have begun implementing systems of choice and are working on developing different kinds of excellence in each of the involved schools.

B. Another approach to serving diversity is described in the prospectus for the new Fratney school in Milwaukee. The plan calls for a multi-cultural, two-way bilingual school. In the founders view:

"Multicultural awareness should permeate all aspects of the curriculum, with special emphasis placed on building respect and understanding for the cultures represented in the school by the diverse student body. Our definition of multiculturalism includes the development of 'ethnic literacy' in which students understand, analyze and respect their own cultural roots and others; and an antiracist perspective in which students learn about the roots of racism, its harmfulness and the need to oppose it."

"The school will accept students of all races who speak either Spanish or English. The goal will be to have half of the student body be children who speak Spanish as their first language and the other half be children who speak English as their first language. Children will learn to read initially in their mother tongue, but then be expected to become bilingual and biliterate by the end of 5th grade."[19]

C. Another approach to serving diversity is found in the guiding principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools. Dedicated to "personalizing" instruction, the coalition advocates school structures that allow instruction to move between large and small groupings of students as the subject matter and learning style of students dictate. With an emphasis on the mastery of competencies and the elimination of grade levels, the Coalition hopes schools can create environments in which students learn in ways best suited to them.[20]

<u>Evaluation of Student Competencies</u>

A. The Coalition of Essential Schools has as one of its goals the development of evaluation techniques based on public demonstrations of competencies.[21] As such assessment devices are put in place, there is no reason why noneducators cannot be part of the audience and/or jury for deciding whether mastery has been achieved. By including trained outside evaluators, by matching community participants with the skills and competencies being judged and by establishing coherent guidelines for the procedure, schools can be certain that the procedure is fair to the students and informative to the community.

B. At Learning Unlimited, a school-within-a-school in Indianapolis, students must complete a minimum of 24 hours of community-based learning experiences each semester in both their junior and senior year. Evaluation of this time is made by a community resource person who has agreed to serve this function and who has signed a contract with the student specifying the learning objectives of the project. The resource person fills out a standard summative evaluation form grading the student on dependability, attitude, effort and the extent of fulfillment of the signed contract.[22]

C. At Jefferson County Open High School, students are responsible for performing and documenting their own evaluations. Indeed, the word "evaluation", is school language for the process of thought and writing through which students assess the gains they have

made and the learning accomplished in any given activity. Any and all activities are to be evaluated and linked to the school's list of skill objectives which are binding on all students. These student written evaluations must be validated by a responsible person, on the staff, or in the community, who witnessed the activity and can be convinced that the evaluation makes sense.[23]

D. At the St. Paul Open School, students must prove their competence in a variety of skills before being awarded a graduation certificate. Students prove these competencies by offering affidavits signed by adults in the school and the community. A graduation committee, consisting of a counselor, the assistant director of the school, the student's advisor and a parent, friend or staff member chosen by the student, must approve of the adults selected to validate the students activities.[24]

## FOOTNOTES

1. "The Fratney Neighborhood Specialty School," a draft proposal by neighbors for a New Fratney Street School, January 14, 1988.

2. Association of Community Based Education, Adult Literacy: A study of Community Based Programs, Revised and Updated September 1986, Volume I, Study Findings and Recommendations.

3. Ann Bastian, Norm Fruchter, et al., Choosing Equality: The Case for Democratic Schooling, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press), 1985, p. 174-177.

4. Norm Fruchter, et al., "Public Policy and Public Schools: A Training Program for Parents," Urban Education, July 1985

5. George Wood, "The Hope for Civic Education," unpublished manuscript, Institute for Democracy in Education, School of Education, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio, p. 17.

6. Ibid pp. 17 and 18

7. Elizabeth J. Gatewood and Paul F. DeLargy, "School Based Businesses in Georgia," unpublished paper, p. 1.

8. Ibid.

9. Lois Holzman, "Children as Changers: An Empowerment Model of Human Development," keynote address to the Association for the Development of Social Therapy.

10. Tom Gregory, High School as Community, (Bloomington, Indiana: PDK Press, 1987; Theodore Sizer, Horace's Compromise, (Boston: Houghton Miflin), 1985; Gary Wehlage, Robert Rutter and Anne Turnbaugh, "A Program Model for At-Risk High School Students," Educational Leadership, March 1987; Gary Wehlage, "Project : Programs and Policies to Serve At Risk Youth;" and Mary Anne Raywid, "Alternatives for Marginal Students."

11. Among those most outspoken are : Mary Anne Raywid, Charles A Tesconi, Jr. and Donald Warren, Pride and Promise: Schools of Excellence for All the People, Westbury, New York; American Educational Studies Association); The Public Education Information Network, Education for a Democratic Future, St.Louis, 1985; Ann Bastian, et al., Stanley Aronowitz and Henry A. Giroux, Education Under Seize: The Conservative Liberal and Radical Debate Over Schooling (South Hadley, Mass., Bergin and Garvey), 1985.

12. Eliot Wigginton, Sometimes a Shining Moment: The Foxfire Experience (Garden City, New York: Anchor Press), 1985.

13. For a more extensive discussion of Jefferson County Open High School see Experiential Education: Life in the Walkabout Program by Bert Horwood. Association for Experiential Education, University of Colorado School of Education, 1987.

14. George Wood,"Education for Democratic Empowerment: Empowering Democratic Educators," unpublished paper, Institute for Democracy in Education, School of Education, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio.

15. See the newsletter, Rethinking Schools, P.O. Box 93371, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202. Several of the members of Rethinking Schools were active in the community group that obtained permission to reopen the Fratney Street School.

16. Anna Lou Pickett, "The Paraprofessional Movement: Update," Social Policy, Winter 1984 pp. 40-43.

17. Ibid

18. Matters of choice: A Ford Foundation Report on Alternative Schools, 1974.

19. "The Fratney Neighborhood Specialty School," A draft Proposal by Neighbors for a New Fratney Street School, January 14, 1988.

20. Theodore Sizer, Horace's Compromise.

21. Ibid

22. Ibid.

23. Horwood, Experiential Education.

24. Joe Nathan, Free to Teach, Winston Press, Minneapolis, 1983 p.46.